

# sfsp ideas

## for increasing participation

Interesting activities, variety and a tasty lunch – these made the Florence Summer Food Program a popular destination for local kids last summer.

Bordering Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Florence is a rural Wisconsin town with limited-income families. This made the town ripe to start a summer food program in the summer of 1999.

University of Wisconsin Extension originally planned on simply offering a gardening program for kids. But the ideas kept blossoming and before long seven partners came on-board and helped develop a full-blown summer program loaded with fun, innovative and educational activities.

### Looking for Seed Money

Planning began in the summer of 1998 with the partners looking for grant money. While not necessary to running a SFSP, grants can enable a sponsor to provide more activities. The Summer Program secured two – \$3,000 each from the Wisconsin Promise Grant and the Wisconsin Learn and Serve Grant. Both grants required the children to be engaged in community service activities.

### Forming Partnerships

UW-Extension spent much of summer 1998 seeking organizations to help provide educational activities for the kids. The response was overwhelming.

They formed their first partnership with the local Sheriff's Department which offered to spend an hour each week working with the children on safety issues. That was followed with:

1. Glacial Gardeners to teach and assist with the gardening activities.
2. Spread Eagle Sporting to administer the grants and teach physical activities.
3. Florence County School District to provide lunch and a certified teacher/summer school program.
4. The Family Center of Florence County which taught about manners, respect and how to treat others.
5. Chapin Heights Senior Citizens Housing Apartments which provided the site, land for gardens and the opportunity to share the seniors' wisdom.

### Structuring the Program

The SFSP ran for 10 weeks, with the kids meeting every Monday and Thursday from 10:00am - 1:00pm. The school district prepared hot and cold lunches in their central kitchen and delivered them to the site.

Activities centered around weekly themes consisting of four components: nutrition and gardening, physical activity, kindness (manners, interpersonal relations, respect) and crafts. (*Garden and weekly activity themes on back.*)

### Providing Transportation

Because Florence is rural, transportation became an issue. In May, the school district sent two letters and a registration form home with every child explaining the program. Using address information from the form, Extension generated a list to help parents form carpools. This was an easy way to help the parents contact each other and get the kids to participate.

### Hiring and Training Youth Coordinators

With some of the grant money, they hired five youth coordinators to work with the children throughout the program. The coordinators were trained in five core areas: nurturing, protecting, educating, mentoring and community service.

### Working with Local Senior Citizens

Having the kids work one-on-one with seniors in the Chapin Heights apartments was one of the most rewarding and unique aspects of the program. A special bond was formed between these two groups that continued past the summer.

## Seeking grants?

1. Start looking at least one year before you need the money.
2. Call your county Cooperative Extension Service to tap into their knowledge of local and state grant opportunities.
3. Connect with your local school district because many have community education money to spend.
4. Check with community organizations like the YMCA that have a vested interest in child well-being. They often can help.

# Weekly Themes and Activities

G/N = gardening and/or nutrition   P = physical activity   C = craft   K = kindness component

## Who, What and Where

Week 1

G/N: garden tool safety, nutrition journaling  
P: planting the garden, scavenger hunt  
C: making labels for the garden, scarecrows  
K: feelings, learning protective behaviors

## Water Week

Week 6

G/N: dehydrating foods, watering techniques  
P: balloon toss, watermelon seed-spitting  
C: making rain gauges, bubble making  
K: water safety, what to do with bad feelings

## Bug Out

Week 2

G/N: planting, composting, hand-washing  
P: acting like centipedes and other bugs  
C: making ladybug magnets, key holders  
K: "Stop bugging me?" - conflict resolution

## Does this make sense?

Week 7

G/N: five senses, parts of the tongue, tastings  
P: silly games, creating a silly symphony  
C: making herbal bath salts, potpourri pillows  
K: seat belts and safety

## Celebrating Our Roots

Week 3

G/N: tasting root vegetables, planting potatoes  
P: root croquet with potatoes, rutabagas, carrots  
C: making potato stamps, flowers, capillary mats  
K: discussing ancestral roots, diversity and acceptance of differences; purpose of laws

## Underwater

Week 8

G/N: tools used to filet fish, garden journaling  
P: fishing for fish crackers, minnow races  
C: making fish magnets, glittered rocks  
K: making invitations for the seniors to attend the end of summer Harvest Banquet

## This is Berry Good

Week 4

Independence Day weekend and field trip to a u-pick strawberry farm

## Wrap-up Week

Week 9

G/N: picking and preparing vegetables for banquet  
P: field trip to a u-pick farm  
C: wrapping herbs for wreaths  
K: learning how to be a good friend

## Unique Encounters

Week 5

G/N: weed & pest identification, food origins  
P: relay races, capture the flag  
C: making jam with the u-pick strawberries  
K: gave jam to seniors in Chapin Hts. Apts.

## Sign-off Week

Week 10

G/N: making salsa, corn relish and salad  
P: delivering garden produce to a charitable center  
C: making place mats for the Harvest Banquet  
K: learning how to be a good host

## Theme gardens

Working with the Glacial Gardeners, the children planted and tended 12 theme gardens:

1. Butterfly Garden – flowers that attract butterflies
2. Salsa Garden – tomatoes, cilantro, onions, etc.
3. Zoo Garden – plants with animal names
4. Pea Garden – various types of peas
5. Stir-fry Garden – vegetables for stir-fry dishes
6. Fragrance Garden – scented flowers
7. Salad Garden – salad makings
8. Soup Garden – vegetables commonly in soup
9. Tea Garden – various teas like chamomile
10. Heritage Garden – heirloom vegetable varieties
11. Herb Garden – herbs like basil and oregano
12. Exotic Garden – blue potatoes, purple beans, etc.

For more information on the Florence SFSP, contact Katie Tarter at 715/528-5490.